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SUBJECT: SEOUL - PRESS BULLETIN; FEBRUARY 25, 2010

TOP HEADLINES

Chosun Ilbo

Lee Seung-hoon Wins Stunning Gold in Men's 10,000-Meter Speed Skating, Becoming First Asian to Win Longest-Distance Olympic Event

JoongAng Ilbo

"Perfect" Kim Yu-na Finishes First in Women's Figure Skating Short Program with New World Record

Dong-a Ilbo, Segye Ilbo, Seoul Shinmun, All TVs

Another Golden Day for ROK

Lee Seung-hoon's Miracle Gold Shocks World; Kim Yun-na Sets World Record in Short Program, Heading for Gold

Hankook Ilbo

Vancouver Drama! Korea Smiles

Hankyoreh Shinmun

"Wall" Broken Down

Lee Seung-hoon Wins Skating Gold with New Olympic Record

DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENTS

According to Assistant USTR Jim Sanford, President Barack Obama has given an order to resolve pending issues concerning the KORUS FTA. This remark may indicate the Obama Administration's willingness to actively pursue congressional approval of the bilateral trade agreement. (JoongAng, Dong-a, Seoul, KBS, MBC)

Defense Minister Kim Tae-young, in a Feb. 24 speech, said that the ROK and the U.S. are cooperating to prevent a possible security vacuum following the planned transfer of wartime operational control from the U.S. to the ROK. (Dong-a)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth told

reporters in Beijing yesterday after meeting with China's chief nuclear negotiator Wu Dawei: "We just completed a very useful exchange of views ... on the status of the efforts to resume the Six-Party process." (Hankook, Segye, KBS, MBC)

According to diplomatic sources in Beijing and Seoul, during his Feb. 9-13 visit to Beijing, North Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, Kim Kye-gwan, asked China to urge the U.S. to take face-saving measures for the North, and China strongly urged the North to stop demanding a lifting of sanctions as a precondition to the resumption of the Six-Party Talks. (JoongAng)

Chief ROK nuclear negotiator, Wi Sung-lac, in a Feb. 24 meeting in Beijing with ROK correspondents, said that the Six-Party Talks may resume in the first half of this year. (Chosun, KBS, VoiceofPeople)

MEDIA ANALYSIS

-N. Korea

Most ROK media carried reports quoting Special Representative for North Korea Policy Stephen Bosworth as telling reporters in Beijing yesterday after meeting with China's chief nuclear negotiator Wu Dawei: "We just completed a very useful exchange of views ... on the status of the efforts to resume the Six-Party process."

In a related development, moderate Hankook Ilbo quoted a source in

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Beijing as saying: "China must have clearly conveyed to Ambassador Bosworth the options North Korea can take in the future."

Meanwhile, conservative Chosun Ilbo, state-run KBS and VoiceofPeople, an Internet news site, covered Feb. 24 press remarks in Beijing by Chief ROK nuclear negotiator, Wi Sung-lac, in which he said that the Six-Party Talks may resume in the first half of this year. Conservative Chosun, in particular, observed that even though the chief ROK negotiator stated that there was nothing new about what North Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, Kim Kye-gwan, told Chinese officials during his recent visit to Beijing, he looked optimistic (about resuming the Six-Party Talks.)

Citing diplomatic sources in Beijing and Seoul, right-of-center JoongAng Ilbo reported that North Korea's chief nuclear negotiator, Kim Kye-gwan, during his Feb. 9-13 visit to Beijing, asked China to urge the U.S. to take face-saving measures for the North, while China strongly urged the North to stop demanding a lifting of sanctions as a precondition to the resumption of the Six-Party Talks. JoongAng cited sources as saying: "The face-saving measures mentioned by Kim refer to the lifting of sanctions and a U.S. commitment to discuss a peace treaty, which the North has demanded as preconditions for its return to the Six-Party Talks."

-U.S.-China Relations

Chosun Ilbo carried an op-ed written by former Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan. It said: "These days, the U.S. and China are in conflict over most of the pending issues. ... In order to prevent the U.S.-China conflict from (negatively) affecting issues on the Korean Peninsula, we need, in addition to the alliance with the U.S., to establish a mechanism for multilateral security cooperation, which is similar to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). ... Whether or not there is progress in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, we should maintain channels for smooth communication with North Korea. ... The current administration has sufficiently made its position clear to the North for the past two years and... there are signs of a change in the North's attitude, at least in tactical terms but not strategic terms. It is time for the ROKG to take advantage of this change (in North Korea's attitude) to 'upgrade' its North Korea policy by promoting an inter-Korean summit."

FEATURES

US PRESIDENT OBAMA VOICES RESOLVE FOR US-ROK FTA RATIFICATION
(Yonhap News, February 24)

By Reporter Hwang Doo-hyong

U.S. President Barack Obama said Wednesday he is determined to resolve outstanding issues with the pending free trade deals with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama for their ratification.

"That's why we will work to resolve outstanding issues, so that we can move forward on trade agreements with key partners like South Korea, Panama, and Colombia," Obama told a business roundtable at the Regis Hotel here (Washington, DC), noting other countries "have been able to align the interests of workers, businesses, and government around trade agreements that open new markets and create new jobs."

"We must do the same, and I'm committed to making that happen," he said. (sic)

The imbalance in auto trade and restricted shipments of U.S. beef to South Korea are the biggest hurdles to the early ratification of the Korea FTA, signed in 2007.

Obama said last week he "would press for passage this year of free-trade agreements with South Korea, Panama, and Colombia" to help create jobs through export growth, although he cautioned that

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"different glitches" must first be resolved with each country.

The U.S. wants to address the auto and beef issues in side agreements without revising the text of the deal.

South Korea is calling for the ratification of the Korea-US (KORUS) FTA by this summer, fearing that any further delay may jeopardize its passage this year due to the politically sensitive mid-term elections in November.

The KORUS FTA has been sidelined by health care, financial reform and other more pressing issues, and Obama has said he will seek the right "political timing" for its submission amid protectionist sentiment in Congress in the worst recession in decades.

U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk echoed Obama's theme.

"Right now, we are seeking to resolve outstanding issues on the Colombian, Korean, and Panamanian Free Trade Agreements in an effort to move those forward at the appropriate time," Kirk told the Retail Industry Leaders' Association Logistics Conference held here.

The chief U.S. trade negotiator said those deals, once effectuated, will "tear down trade barriers and open up new markets for American businesses to grow and create jobs through trade," and "will create billions of dollars in new market access for American exporters."

Kirk said last week that his office was trying to develop ideas to address its concerns over lopsided auto trade with South Korea so the free trade deal can clear Congress.

"We need to address the concerns about fair trade in autos," he said. "We at USTR are hard at work to develop ideas for addressing these concerns, and we will be consulting closely with members of Congress and other American stakeholders as we move down this path."

In his first State of the Union address last month, Obama pledged to enhance trade with South Korea, Colombia, and Panama to help fuel the fledgling economic recovery.

"If America sits on the sidelines while other nations sign trade deals, we will lose the chance to create jobs on our shores," he said. "That's why we will try to continue to shape a Doha trade agreement... that opens global markets, and why we will strengthen

our trade relations in Asia and with key partners like South Korea, Panama, and Colombia." (sic)

South Korea and India put a free trade deal into effect last month, and Seoul hopes to ratify another deal with the European Union, signed last year, that will take effect this summer.

(Ed. Note: This text was provided in English by Yonhap news service. The original quote by President Obama is as follows:

Now, I know that trade policy has been a longstanding divide between business and labor; Democrats and Republicans. But to those who would reflexively support every trade deal, I would say that our competitors have to play fair and our agreements have to be enforced. We simply cannot cede more jobs or markets to unfair trade practices. And to those who would reflexively oppose every trade agreement, they need to know that if America sits on the sidelines while other nations sign trade deals, we will lose the chance to create jobs on our shores. Other countries, whether China or Germany or Brazil, have been able to align the interests of workers, businesses, and government around trade agreements that open new markets and create new jobs. We must do the same.

That's why we launched the Trans Pacific Partnership to strengthen our trade relations with Asia, the fastest growing market in the world. That's why we will work to resolve outstanding issues so that we can move forward on trade agreements with key partners like South Korea, Panama, and Colombia. And that's why we will try to conclude a Doha trade agreement - not just any agreement, but one

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that creates real access to key global markets.)

THE MORE U.S., CHINA DRIFT APART, THE MORE WE SHOULD EMBRACE N. KOREA

(Chosun Ilbo, February 25, Page 30; Excerpts)

By Yoon Young-gwan, former Foreign Minister and professor at Seoul National University

The U.S. and China are engaging in an intense power game. These days, the U.S. and China are in conflict over most of the pending issues. China may think that the U.S. is unlikely to recover its financial superpower status which it lost following the global economic crisis. The U.S. faces the largest-ever budget deficit which observers believe will not be reversed within the next 10 years. Moreover, Japanese political kingpin Ichiro Ozawa visited China with a 600-member delegation while the country is at odds with the U.S. (In this situation,) China may consider now to be the right time to change the rules of the game. During a meeting in the U.S., a Chinese scholar allegedly said that the current China is not what it was, urging the U.S. to change its attitude toward China.

However, the U.S., which is still a military superpower, has intervened in East Asia (affairs) since the early twentieth century and will not leave this area in the hands of China. This may further intensify U.S.-China conflicts.

When will an atmosphere of cooperation between the U.S. and China be created? China will seek cooperation when it judges that its strained relations with the U.S. could deal a blow to its economy. Despite its outward confidence, China is vulnerable in many respects. Hundreds of millions of people suffer from poverty. Without feeding them, the Communist government would not be able to win solid public support. The issue of ethnic minorities could also be a destabilizing factor.

The problem is that confrontation between the U.S. and China will put the ROK in a difficult position. We are in a position where we inevitably need cooperation of both nations on the nuclear issue and North Korea's uncertain future. However, if conflict between the U.S. and China deepens, and the suspicions between the two nations grow, they will hold each other in check and conflict with each other, rather than cooperating over the future of the Korean Peninsula. The more distrustful the two nations are of each other,

the more obsessed China will be with sustaining North Korea as a buffer zone against the influence of the ROK and the U.S.

In order to prevent the U.S.-China conflict from (negatively) affecting issues on the Korean Peninsula, we need, in addition to the alliance with the U.S., to establish a mechanism for multilateral security cooperation, which is similar to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). However, Northeast Asia does not have such a body yet. This implies that Northeast Asia is a tough region where a power struggle is more intense than Europe.

With the international political situation surrounding the Korean Peninsula getting rougher, a strong force bringing together the ROK and North Korea must be at work, and the ROK should lead the force, especially if the ROK has any willingness to determine the future of the Korean Peninsula on its own. The situation in North Korea has become more urgent, and when compared with a car, has shifted from second to third gear. Its economy has long been in tatters, and its currency reform has failed. There is uncertainty about the regime's hereditary power succession, and residents distrust their government, which is not capable of feeding its people.

Whether or not there is progress in resolving the North Korean nuclear issue, we should maintain channels for smooth communication with North Korea. This is because those channels are the basis of the force in bringing the two Koreas together. The current administration has sufficiently made its position clear to the North for the past two years, and we believe that the message has now

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gotten across to the North. There are signs of a change in the North's attitude, at least in tactical terms but not strategic terms.

It is time for the ROKG to take advantage of this change (in North Korea's attitude) to "upgrade" its North Korea policy by promoting an inter-Korean summit. The ROK should reaffirm its principle of getting the North to abandon its nuclear ambitions, faithfully improve and expand its economic cooperation with the North based on market principles, and provide the North with humanitarian aid under the condition that Pyongyang accepts international-level monitoring.

Above all, Seoul should come up with a mid- to long-term master plan about how to address the pending North Korean issues in the coming days.

"KOREATOWN" INSIDE BAGRAM BASE EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN APRIL
(Chosun Ilbo, February 25, Page 8)

By Correspondent Lee Ha-won

Construction of a "Koreatown" is underway near the barbed-wire fences at the U.S. Bagram Air Base's westernmost tip, which is called a "huge construction site." The town, composed of three buildings, is scheduled for completion in April. When I visited the site on February 23, workers were putting the final touches on a Korean hospital, vocational training center, and staff housing. Korean supervisors in green jackets from Samhwan Construction were directing Afghan laborers.

The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) has put about 20 billion Won into this construction site since last June. A two-story Korean hospital, which covers a total area of 3,000m², has 30 rooms for inpatients and three operating rooms. It is described as one of the most sophisticated buildings on the base. Since the hospital has its own entrance, one does not need to go through the front gate of the base. A two-floor training center covering 4,000m² will hold 75 students, 15 students each in five fields: electricity, computer, construction, welding, and automobiles. Jun Joong-young of KOICA said, "We chose the fields that will be the most helpful to local residents. We will recruit students beginning on March 26."

Staff housing will be in a three-story building. It has an 80-bed capacity and contains a conference room and a cafeteria. Chung

Yun-taek, a Foreign Ministry official who was dispatched to lead the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) at Bagram Air Base, noted, "Since there are not many sophisticated buildings at Bagram Air Base, a Korean hospital and a vocational training center have become frequent visiting spots for U.S. military officials." Most of the construction materials were imported. Shin Kun-bong, a construction manager from Samhwan Construction, said, "Afghanistan's construction level is too poor to even build stairs properly. Because we had to teach each person everything about construction, it (the construction job) was twice as hard."

There are now about 40 Koreans, including six women, at Bagram Air Base. Half of them are KOICA employees, medical staffers, professors for vocational training, police, and security forces, and the other half are employees of the construction company. When the PRT is soon stationed in Charikar, capital of Parwan Province, the number of Koreans at the base will double. The construction company's employee cafeteria is already so popular that even U.S. soldiers come and attempt to pay for Korean dishes.

So far most Koreans here are volunteers. They have lived in storage container boxes or wooden buildings. Sergeant Choi Joon-sang, who was dispatched by the National Policy Agency, was assigned to one of the "cells," which were made by dividing a container into smaller rooms using wooden partitions. Police Inspector Na Hong-kyu, the head security guard of the hospital, previously served for a year in East Timor in 2007. He said, "Although the living conditions here are not that good, I feel that my work is worthwhile."

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PATIENTS WAIT ALL NIGHT IN FRONT OF (ROK) HOSPITAL (IN AFGHANISTAN)

(Chosun Ilbo, February 25, Page 8)

By Washington Correspondent Lee Ha-won

On February 23, 30 Afghans are waiting with number tickets in their hands in front of "Hankook Hospital." The shabby one-story wooden building is located in the west end of Bagram Air Base. A patient in his 60s, who arrived after a nine-hour drive from Bamyan Province, said he queued up from 2 a.m. This patient with spinal pain said, "I heard that Hankook Hospital in Parwan treats patients well." Lameshiagar, who is 17 years old, visited this place due to a headache and a hearing disturbance. He thumbed up, saying, "This hospital is popular because the Korean medical team is excellent and doles out effective medicine for free."

Hankook Hospital, under the oversight of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), has become essential (for Afghans.) Sometimes, so many patients start to line up even from 10 p.m. the previous evening at the entrance of the hospital, which leads to Bagram Air Base's barbed wires.

The hospital gives out number tickets to about 100 patients every day. Seyed Shiragha (29 years old) who manages registration of patients at the reception desk said, "A number of patients drive to this place for more than 16 hours from Hirat Province adjacent to Iran or a Pakistan border region. He added, "There are few hospitals to go to in Afghanistan even if you have money. But patients flock here because it is said that the Korean medical team is great."

Hankook Hospital at Bagram Air Base gained trust from local residents by treating patients for free since medics from the Dongui Medical Unit and engineers from the Dasan Engineering Unit were dispatched in 2002. After the Dongui Medical Unit withdrew in 2007, the hospital resumed operation in June 2008. There is an Egyptian hospital at (Bagram Air) Base.

Hankook Hospital is staffed with two Korean doctors, one Korean pharmacist and three Afghan doctors. The hospital provides medical service to Afghan women on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday and to men on Tuesday and Thursday. Cheon Jeong-ae, a 39 year-old nurse, takes care of patients by wearing a hijab to respect the Islam culture.

She is popular among patients and called "Bagram's angel." She learned Dari here to assist in attending to her patients.

However, a lack of advanced medical equipment prevents accurate diagnoses. Doctor Shim Seong-hun said he cannot perform a thorough medical examination for a 50-year old patient by using existing equipment. The patient claims that he is suffering from double vision. Doctor Shim can provide only pulmonary function and X-ray tests. The doctor said, "I really feel bad when I have to send them (patients) back." The hospital believes that when the construction of a new two-story building is completed in April, things will improve.

Hankook Hospital officials are on alert against the possibility that al-Qaida terrorists may infiltrate (into the place) under the guise of patients. In the past, intelligence regarding a possible suicidal bombing forced the hospital to close down for days. Last year, the hospital installed a bomb detector capable of detecting even a liquid explosive. Afghan patients should undergo a six-stage inspection process (to see a doctor at this hospital.) Afterwards, the ROK's special police forces along with local guards keep watch on them, with their guns loaded. Jeong Yon-taeck, Director of Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) at Bagram Air Base, said, "I feel sorry for Afghans who stand in a long line to receive treatment even though they have to pass a strict inspection. There is a need to consider building a general hospital some day."

TOKOLA